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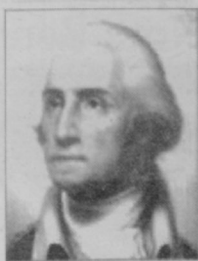
Nota Bene, January 23, 2007

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SBA Focuses on Gaining Flexible Exam Policy

By CARA SHAFRAN
Staff Writer

Since the Nota Bene first reported on the SBA's proposal to move GW Law from an "assigned" exam policy to a more flexible schedule one year ago, the school has tentatively implemented a new flexible exam policy covering a limited number of classes. This pilot program has inspired the SBA to introduce a new survey of student opinion regarding the exams and push for the introduction of a comprehensive program that would give students more freedom to choose classes.

At present, GW has one of the most conservative exam policies in the country. Only 4 other schools in the top 30 ranked institutions have similar policies. Under the "assigned" exam system, students are faced with take-it-or-leave-it choices whereby exam times are set at the start of the year and are not subject to change — barring illness or family emergency. If there is a conflict between the exam times for two classes, students must choose one of the two.

But the opportunity to make a flexible exam policy at GW Law a reality in the near future seems to be moving forward, with the SBA reaching out to students and faculty in a effort to bring about change.

The SBA has expressed excitement about the opportunity this semester to have a discussion reviewing the current

system of how exams are scheduled, as well as on how concerns surrounding the issue should be addressed. This week, starting on Tuesday, the SBA will be surveying students on the issue of flexible exams. The SBA intends to use the survey results as a basis for any of proposals that come out of the SBA Senate.

Efforts toward this change have a long history. In February 2006, the SBA sent a report to the law faculty intended to spur discussion of the current exam policy and potentially bring changes that would better serve student and faculty interests. The three main propositions of the report requested that the administration provide students with greater rescheduling options, give faculty flexibility on whether to use a flexible exam policy, and encourage more take-home exams or paper options.

This fall for the first time ever, the law school held a pilot flexible exam program in four courses. Though there were some issues with notice and participation, the pilot allowed proponents of change to debunk preconceived notions that it would be unworkable to allow exam flexibility at GW Law. The pilot program also provided models for how exam flexibility can be adopted at the law school.

The pilot was successfully administered, at least in the eyes of students. In Prof. Mitchell's Corporations class, 50% of the students opted to take a "flexible option." Alexandra Freidberg, a student from that class, was pleased to have been

given such flexibility.

"I highly support the flexible exam schedule," she said. "It will encourage people to take classes who otherwise would not due to a difficult exam schedule. I actually have a bad exam schedule this semester and am hoping that we will

be able to switch again!"

The SBA's goal for this semester is to have a faculty vote on the adoption of flexible exams at the law school. Leading the fight for change is SBA President

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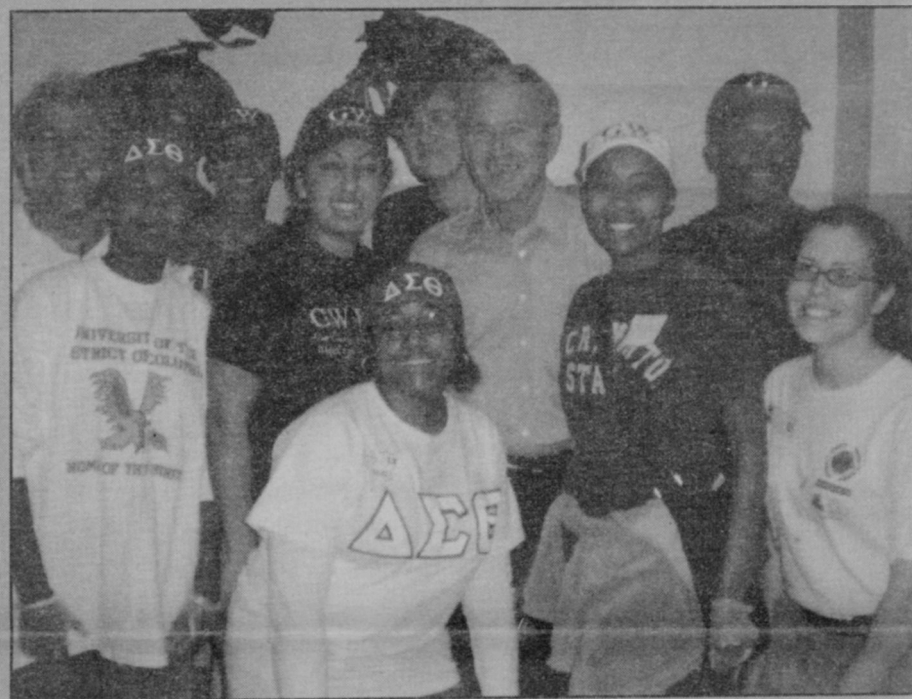


Photo courtesy of Nicole Alfred

GW Law '06 alumni Will Wilder, Shani Gholston, and Joe Hardy (back row in GW Law hats) join other City Year volunteers and President Bush, who is flanked by GW Law 2Ls Nicole Alfred and Adrienne Lawrence at this year's Martin Luther King Jr. Service Day.

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Introducing Steven Knapp, GWU's 16th President

By JOHN WALKER
Staff Writer

Provost Steven Knapp of Johns Hopkins University will assume the position of President of The George Washington University on August 1 this year, succeeding outgoing President Joel Trachtenburg.

With his history as an effective fund raiser, Knapp may be able to raise money that would increase the University's endowment and reduce its fiscal reliance on the law school.

The University's Board of Trustees, the University's highest governing authority with sole power to confirm a selection for the position, was unanimous in their appointment of Dr. Knapp as the new president.

"The fact that Steve was the unanimous choice of the search committee speaks volumes about his credentials,

especially given the tremendous interest in this position and the outstanding, diverse pool of candidates," said W. Russell Ramsey, B.A. '81, vice chair of the Board of Trustees and chairman of the presidential search committee, in a press release. "We firmly believe we have found a very special successor to President Trachtenburg, one who shares the University's vision and who will add to its prestige and reputation."

Dr. Knapp was recommended by a presidential search committee, which the Board established in May of 2006 after President Trachtenburg announced his retirement. The Board formally announced its search on September 1, 2006 with the publishing of an advertisement in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and the activating of a presidential search website: <http://www.presidentialsearch.gwu.edu/>.

The search committee was intended to represent the varied interests of the

university and was composed of 9 members of the Board of Trustees, including emeritus trustee Joseph L. Brand, J.D. '63, the president of the Alumni Association, the undergraduate Student Association President, and three faculty members—one from the medical school, one from the department of psychology, and our own Professor of Law Arthur E. Wilmarth, Jr.

"The Search Committee felt strongly that President-designate Knapp has the requisite experience and skills to move GW into the top tier of our nation's research universities. If he is successful in doing so, as I fully expect, that success will certainly result in great benefits for the Law School," Professor Wilmarth said. Due to an agreement among the members of the Search Committee to hold all deliberations strictly confidential, Professor Wilmarth was unable to comment extensively on precisely why he felt that Dr. Knapp would be a benefit specifically

to the law school community.

The search committee was also aided in its search by Academic Search, Inc., a consulting firm for academic hiring with headquarters on nearby K Street NW.

Dr. Knapp assumes a role that has become increasingly business-oriented in recent times, as modern university presidents have been more involved in administrative management and fundraising rather than direct education and research. A press release states that the Board specifically sought applicants "who demonstrated a profound commitment to academic excellence; entrepreneurial vision; institutional leadership, both internally and externally; a demonstrated ability to raise funds in support of academic programs, scholarships, and endowment; and a proven record of community and national leadership."

Dr. Knapp will come to George

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NEWS

1L Christian Washington Wins Martin Luther King Jr. Award

By EVAN MAYOR
Staff Writer

Christian Washington, 1L, knows firsthand the sacrifice that accompanies service. Others have noticed his sacrifice as well: the University recently announced that Washington is one of six winners of this year's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Award.

Dean of the Law School Frederick Lawrence proudly recognized Washington's contributions to the University community and humanity in general.

"Christian Washington exemplifies Dr. King's teachings of service to others and has done so throughout his career as a GW undergrad, and now as one of our students here at GW Law, and we are proud of all of his accomplishments," Dean Lawrence said.

According to Michael Tapscott, Director of GW's Multicultural Student Services Center, the award is given to individuals "who have made a conscious choice to live a life that Dr. King would be proud of."

Tapscott said that to his knowledge, Washington is the first law student to receive the award. He noted, however, that graduate students have only become eligible for the honor in the past few years.

Washington, a D.C. native who attended GW as an undergraduate student as well, helped found the George Washington Williams House, a living and learning community townhouse whose mission is to promote African American history, culture and unity. He lived in the brownstone on campus for two years.

"I spent the first night in the house

as soon as it was completed," Washington said. "That first night I was amazed to see it done, happy to see it done, and I knew it was the start of something special."

Washington said that in addition to developing a close bond with his housemates, he helped sponsor lectures and gatherings at the University. Among other things, he brought civil rights leader Frank Smith, Jr. to

campus and set up a breakfast with former D.C. Mayor Anthony Williams and GW President Stephen Joel Trachtenberg.

Washington also served as Chief Administrative Officer for the Student Association, the University's student government.

When asked to comment on the award, Washington modestly spoke of the honor in being considered worthy of an award which bears Dr. King's name.

"I feel that this particular award honors those who are committing themselves to service in the same vein as Dr.

King," Washington said. "I would never liken myself to the amazing things that Dr. King did to this nation and really the peoples of this world. It's truly an honor and it's very humbling to know that the university community thinks we are doing something in that likeness to follow in his footsteps. Obviously to be mentioned in the same sentence as Dr. King is an honor to anyone."

Tapscott said that Washington's humble attitude is indicative of those who are chosen to receive the award. He also commented on the process by which recipients are selected.

According to Tapscott, a committee which consists of ten faculty and staff members meets to consider applicants over a "soul food" type luncheon.

"It's not terribly fancy, but it's efficient," Tapscott said.

Tapscott also noted the various qualities for which the committee looks in selecting individuals to receive the prestigious award.

"We want someone who has put a lot of time into something," Tapscott said of the ideal candidate. "We are not looking for a lot of talk, we are looking for people that have put their commitment to the test, people that apply their experience here at GW into action in some form."

Tapscott described Washington

as "a solid, strong leader you could always count on." He said that a number of undergraduate students who applied for the award included letters of recom-

mendation in their applications which were written by Washington, which testified to his impact on the community.

"It's a real honor to be recognized for something like that, to be recognized for service to the community," said Washington, who wants to work in government and to be a judge someday. "I think that is one of the highest compliments anyone can be paid."

Tapscott said the applicant pool has been expanded in recent years to include

a greater part of the university community.

President Trachtenberg, another graduate student and three undergraduate students join Washington as recipients of this year's award. President Trachtenberg's recognition marks the first time a faculty or staff member has received the award.

Award winners will receive a medal and give a short speech at a program and reception open to the public on January 31, 2007 in the Marvin Center's Continental Ballroom. Students who would like to attend the program may RSVP to assist with seating by calling 202 994 MSSC (6772). □

"Christian Washington exemplifies Dr. King's teachings of service to others and has done so throughout his career as a GW undergrad, and now as one of our students here at GW Law, and we are proud of all of his accomplishments."
~ Dean Lawrence

"It's truly an honor and it's very humbling to know that the university community thinks we are doing something in that likeness to follow in his footsteps. Obviously to be mentioned in the same sentence as Dr. King is an honor to anyone."
~ Christian Washington

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Sam Jammal. "This semester we will be going to the faculty with our proposal," said Jammal, "On February 6th, we will be presenting before the Faculty Curriculum Committee several options and policy changes that we feel are feasible and should be considered."

According to Jammal, the biggest victory of this push for a modification in exam policy has been getting this discussion to happen between students, faculty, and the administration. "Everyone, including the Faculty, whom will take up the issue hopefully within the next month, and students, whom will be surveyed, may have different opinions on the issue, we look forward to a robust debate on how to provide greater exam scheduling flexibility," said Jammal.

The fact that the pilot program took place was in and of itself a success. Though the pilot program may have been small in scope, it was a change from the status quo that lays the groundwork for how the Records Office would deal with greater exam flexibility.

But because of logistical issues the pilot that was run is not necessarily the best indicator of whether flexible exams would work at GW. Many students in the

four selected courses only learned that they had exam scheduling options a few weeks before their finals. Ideally, the pilot would have been announced before fall registration or during the add/drop period so students could adjust their schedules accordingly.

Students have made it clear that there is strong support from their side for flexible exams, perhaps in response to the SBA campaigns. According to a survey conducted by the SBA last April, 92% of students prefer changes in the current exam policy to provide for more flexibility. Moreover, 63% of students reported that the exam schedule plays a role in how they chose classes, while 60% stated that they would reschedule a conflicting exam during the reading period if offered.

But proponents of changing the schedule face opposition from faculty who argue that flexible exams increase the chance of honor code violations. Proponents, on the other hand, find it puzzling that faculty would challenge the integrity of law students, individuals who will be responsible for violations of ethics rules both as students and in their careers as future attorneys. □

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NEWS

Competition and Liberalization in Egypt

BY ANITA VALLIANA
Assistant News Editor

Although the Muslim World has long been of concern to the international community, the tragedy of September 11, 2001 undoubtedly made matters more urgent. In the past five years, the U.S., especially, has focused its attention on the region.

While the media has tended to focus on the many military and political schemes which the U.S. has initiated in the Muslim World post- Sept. 11, it has often failed to appropriately highlight the extent of the country's economic contributions to nations in the region.

In its 2004 report entitled "Foreign Aid: An Introductory Overview of U.S. Programs and Policy," the Congressional Research Service (CRS) noted that the Bush Administration's National Security Strategy, released in September, 2002, established global development as the third "pillar" of the nation's security.

Accordingly, while the U.S. provided economic assistance to 150 countries in 2004, Iraq, Israel, Egypt and Afghanistan received the bulk of its distributions (respectively). In fact, the CRS reported that Egypt alone benefited from 1.87 billion dollars of U.S. aid.

Changes in circumstances since 2004 have, however, led the U.S. to rethink its deliverance of foreign assistance in the Middle East. According to SJD Candidate Mohamed R. Hassanien, the U.S. will soon, for instance, significantly reduce its aid to Egypt.

In an address which he delivered to students and members of the faculty at the Law School on January 10, 2007, Hassanien, who, among other things, has served as a Professor of Law at Cairo University in Egypt, voiced concerns that any considerable reduction in foreign aid to Egypt could result in political and economic upheaval.

Hassanien noted, however, that trade reforms relating to the Egyptian service sector could alleviate some of the potential problems that reduced economic aid might pose and further espoused that such reforms could significantly benefit the U.S. in its War on Terror.

According to the World Trade Organization (WTO), "services are the largest and most dynamic component of both developed and developing country economies." They range from architecture and telecommunications to tourism and space transport.

Perhaps most interesting to members of the legal community however, and largely the focus of Hassanien's address, the service sector also incorporates legal services.

Hassanien said that Egypt's pursuance of a policy of "competitive liberalization—which essentially champions the advancement of free trade globally, regionally and bilaterally and the stimulation of competition as such"—with regard to services (especially legal services) could prove particularly beneficial to both the domestic and international communities.

On the global front, the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) governs the international trade of services.

Members of the WTO (including Egypt and the U.S.) have committed themselves to policies of "progressive development," which Hassanien said translates to "the gradual elimination of restrictions on foreigners."

According to Hassanien, Egypt, which serves as the largest Arab exporter of services (services account for approximately 58 percent of Egypt's gross domes-

"The concern for the U.S. when it is negotiating a free trade agreement is not the market; that is insignificant for Americans. Political considerations are more important. Egypt is a strong ally to the U.S. in the Middle East [and] it is helpful in the War on Terror."
~ Mohamed R. Hassanien

tic product (GDP)), is currently involved in multi-lateral negotiations to further deregulate and open its market.

With regard to the regional setting, Hassanien said that the Greater Arab Free Trade Agreement (GAFTA), which operates as a "WTO Plus" in that it "includes more concessions than are offered in GATS," has not effectively deregulated markets in the Middle East.

Hassanien said that pursuance of a policy of heightened deregulation between nations in the Middle East would likely result in progress of the region. For example, Hassanien noted that 98 percent of the laws in Gulf countries are rooted in Egyptian laws. As such, the opening of the regional market to legal services would allow Egyptians to export lawyers, thus creating jobs for Egyptians. Other Arab countries would benefit in that individuals specifically trained in Egyptian law would provide insight with regard to how the legal system should operate.

Nonetheless, Hassanien focused the bulk of his address on the liberalization of trade bilaterally between the U.S. and Egypt and the potential benefits of such action.

According to Hassanien, the two nations initiated such negotiations in 1997. Certain concerns, however, resulted in their eventual breakdown.

"Particularly, the U.S. became concerned about various human rights violations and how the Egyptian government treats its own citizens," Hassanien said. Further, the U.S. also became uneasy over "the slow progress of the Egyptian economy. Egypt was not up to the standard which the U.S. expects when it looks for trade partnerships." Finally, Hassanien said that controversy over use of genetically modified organisms (GMO) in the U.S.—in which Egypt sided with Europe—further aggravated relations between the two nations.

Hassanien argued, however, that the three aforementioned concerns no longer hinder the potential for a free trade agreement between the U.S. and Egypt.

"First, a free trade agreement would

give the U.S. a chance to request more reforms [i.e. with regard to human rights] from Egypt," Hassanien said. "Also, since July of 2004, the Egyptian economy is going up again as a result of social and economic reforms pursued by the new cabinet. Further, a free trade agreement would bring WTO disagreements [i.e. over GMO] together" so that they could be addressed accordingly.

It is hardly difficult to see that the liberalization of trade between the U.S. and Egypt would benefit Egyptians. Among other things, job opportunities for Egyptians would heavily increase. Hassanien argued, however, that the U.S. too would benefit from such an arrangement.

"The concern for the U.S. when it is negotiating a free trade agreement is not the market; that is insignificant for Americans," Hassanien said. "Political considerations are more important. Egypt is a strong ally to the U.S. in the Middle East [and] it is helpful in the War on Terror."

According to Hassanien, a free trade agreement between the U.S. and Egypt would enhance Egyptian cooperation in the War on Terror.

Furthermore, Hassanien argued that "opening the economic market will enhance [observance of] human rights in Egypt. Eliminating restrictions will run in favor of human rights in that economic reforms will allow for more human rights reforms."

Because the opening of the market would augment American interest in Egypt and vice versa, Hassanien said, the U.S. would be better able to influence public opinion in Egypt. As such, the observance of free trade between U.S. and Egypt would help to reduce the potential political harms in which a reduction in U.S. foreign aid to Egypt might result. □

PRESIDENT from page 1.

Washington after serving as chief academic officer at the nation's largest research institution, Johns Hopkins University. There Dr. Knapp demonstrated an uncanny ability to make friends and influence them into giving large capital donations. At Hopkins, he initiated a \$230 million capital campaign in 1994 and is currently engaged in a \$3.2 billion endowment campaign.

He also did a great deal to expand the research facilities at Hopkins, adding an undergraduate degree in neuroscience, a bioethics institute, and the addition of an international research institute to the university's campus in Nanjing, China.

Prior to assuming the role of provost at Johns Hopkins University, Dr. Knapp was dean of the School of Arts and Sciences there. He had previously served in the Department of English at the University of California, Berkeley where he studied and taught 18th and 19th century English literature and literary theory. He received his doctorate and masters degrees from Cornell University after graduating Yale University. Dr. Knapp and his wife Diane live on a farm in Sparks, Maryland where they currently raise sheep, having previously raised two children who are now adults. □

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FEATURES

Wireless Medical ID Theft

Identity thieves use many tactics to gather sensitive personal information. Some check your mailbox. Others dumpster-dive. But now a more sophisticated identity thief might be found slowly cruising medical park parking lots with a laptop.

Off work and out of school, I spent the week between

Christmas and New Years taking care of a friend at Sibley Hospital. During the long hours of sitting in the hospital and doctors' offices, I tried to keep myself productive with my laptop, which proved surprisingly difficult without internet access. I scanned the 6th floor of the Hospital and found 13 wireless networks, all of which were private and inaccessible. That was understandable but bad news for my productivity.

Many businesses have begun to recognize the increasing dependence their customers have on internet connectivity. Consequently they, along with local governments and even hospitals and doctors offices now offer "hot spots," or areas of free internet access to patrons. Complimentary internet access has even become an expectation in many places.

Down in the cafeteria, I began to wonder if all medical facilities were as careful as Sibley Hospital about securing their wireless networks. After all, any time you mix open wireless networks with medical information, you run the risk of exposing confidential information protected by HIPAA and privacy acts.

So, I decided to perform a survey of 76 casually selected wireless networks at hospitals and medical parks in Maryland and DC. At the large hospitals I checked, public and private networks were carefully controlled. However, networks in smaller

medical parks, whose tenants are usually independent practitioners, showed far more security defects.

This trend is perhaps predictable because hospitals maintain a staff of IT professionals and have established IT procedures. In contrast, independent practitioners have small staffs and often outsource

IT functions to people of varying skill. When they outsource it to a non-professional, it can have a devastating effect on patient privacy.

Take Dr. Abulhasan Ansari's office for example. He treats adults and young adults in his Clinton, Maryland office. While he was away on vacation, a member of the office staff contracted with an outside IT "professional" to create a wireless network. The network required no password, was not encrypted, and maintained all of the factory default settings. The network was available to any member of the public with a laptop. Though it is unclear whether it was intended to provide complimentary internet access to waiting patrons, it is clear that it was not intended to allow patrons to access confidential patient information. But it didn't turn out that way.

Once my laptop associated with the network, Windows XP automatically scanned it for shared folders, and populated "My Network Places" with shared folders. Unfortunately in Dr. Ansari's case, these folders contained Access da-

tabases with confidential patient information, including names, SSNs, birth dates, and medical histories for his patients. All of this information was available to anyone within 100 feet of the office with a laptop. This meant that an identity thief could slowly cruise through the medical park parking lot, grab the Access databases with the patient data, and leave completely undetected, without stepping foot in the office.

After making this discovery, I entered the office and showed the manager my findings. At first, she insisted that the records were not theirs, but once she inspected the records, she confirmed that they were in fact, Dr. Ansari's patients. She insisted however, that since

After all, any time you mix open wireless networks with medical information, you run the risk of exposing confidential information protected by HIPAA and privacy acts.

they "just recently" established the wireless network, no unauthorized person could have accessed the information in such a short time. I don't think she appreciated the irony of her statement, as she was viewing her patient data on my laptop.

I asked them whether they had any plans to notify the affected patients. Instead of answering the question, she said that they would simply disconnect the wireless router. Once she disconnected the router, the files disappeared from my screen, and she promised to have the "professional" return and secure the network right away.

Exactly one week later, I visited the same medical park and performed the same scan. Fortunately, Dr. Ansari's office had fixed their problem.

In all, I surveyed 76 medical wireless networks. Five allowed access without a

password, encryption, or other security bar. Sibley Hospital, where I spent several days over the break, had at least two public wireless networks in the cafeteria. They did not allow access to any internal network. Three others, both in medical parks (not hospitals), allowed direct access to an internal office network that contained confidential patient data.

Though the percentage of insecure networks in my sample remained well below 10%, a single breach by an identity thief can cause hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage and adversely affect hundreds or even thousands of current and former patients.

Despite clear regulations set forth under the authority of HIPAA, new technology poses challenges to under-trained staff. In addition, as demonstrated by this episode, there is a tendency to eliminate mistakes (ie, turn off the router), rather than properly address the issue, or notify potentially affected individuals.

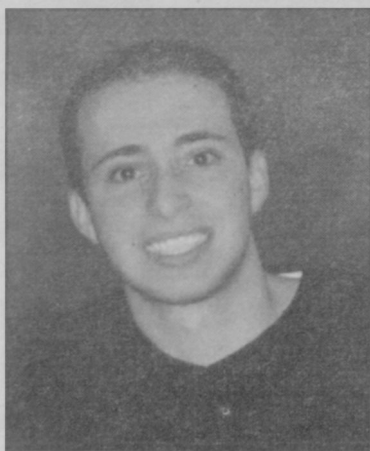
That policy is understandable, if regrettable, because often business owners don't feel the need to "unnecessarily worry" their customers by announcing a potentially embarrassing security gaffe when there is no hard evidence that anyone in particular accessed sensitive data or that there is an increased likelihood of harm. It also regrettably creates an incentive for business owners to put their heads in the sand, so to speak, by not monitoring networks at all; after all, if you don't collect data that could demonstrate whether a breach had occurred, you'll never risk having to notify anyone of a breach.

So, next time you go to the doctor's office, take your laptop, and be prepared to challenge your doctor's information security procedures. And keep an eye out for anyone cruising the parking lot with a laptop. □

Hall of the Marginally Great

Recently some players were elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame and some weren't, touching off another round of sports columns lauding the inductees and arguing about whether So-and-so should get into the Hall in spite of the suspicion that he chewed Bubblicious for most of his career instead of Big League Chew.

There are several events like this each year, when every columnist in America feels the need to weigh in on why Tony Gwynn was such a great player or why Jim Rice shouldn't be in the Hall of Fame or why Peter King is a jackass. The same thing happens right before they announce the league MVP or the All-Star game rosters or which



JONATHAN AUERBACH

Left-Wing Lock

reporter gets to follow Barry Bonds around for a year. As much as I enjoy reading these nuggets of wisdom (and I really, really do), maybe we need to draw straws so only one person gets to write this homerun of a column. A better idea would be to stop inducting people into the Hall of Fame altogether.

Back when it was first created,

there were only five people in the Hall of Fame, and they were pretty famous. After a couple of years, the number rose to 10, then to 34, and then it took awhile but it eventually stopped at 117 (then secretly added another 163 people last month). The point is, no one remembers who the original five were, and their plaques are buried in the Cooperstown basement next to the exhibit from A League of Their Own. I believe this is what they call "dilution" in finance, and it's destroying the Hall of Fame from the ground up (or whatever floor they put the members on).

People who love the Hall of Fame and arguing about it would argue that people who visit Cooperstown want to see all the greatest players and learn about the game. If we stopped inducting people, then the record of baseball is incomplete, they would argue. This is all well and good assuming that the Hall is built to withstand a nuclear blast and that people thousands of years in the future

are going to wonder why Bert Blyleven doesn't have a shiny plaque next to Bruce Sutter. I would argue, based on my one trip to the Hall of Fame 15 years ago, that the exhibits, not the plaque room, are the most interesting part of Cooperstown. Sure it's fun to look at Babe Ruth in all his glory, but who cares about Cal Ripkin? We watched him play on television for years, and I'm pretty sure Babe Ruth couldn't even have been photographed without the camera exploding, so we need that plaque up there or 10 years from now, everyone will think John Goodman is actually the Babe.

Since that proposal will never pass muster with the baseball writers who have a vote and those who don't but like writing columns that start "If I had a vote for the HoF, here's who I'd vote for," I propose a more limited selection process. Just like the World Cup and Olympics aren't held every year, the Hall of Fame elections (not just for baseball, but for every sport) should be limited to once every 10 years.

Also, there should be a cap of 10 selections for every year, and once you fail to make it during one term, you're done. This would make the selection announcement into a huge media event, sparking weeks of promotion and columns from every writer in the country (on second thought, scratch that).

Also, isn't there something wrong

with the writers voting for the inductees? Reporters and columnists aren't exactly objective people, and they hold grudges and have big egos and hate athletes who don't give them good access and still use typewriters. Are we supposed to believe that these people are the best judges of baseball ability? If you have a Hall of Fame vote, that's one column in the bag each year and maybe a second if you want. The Veterans Committee is no better, since they'll either vote for their teammates or not vote for anyone at all. Instead of human voting, a formula should be developed that would decide things on a purely objective level. It should be constructed so the resulting selections would reflect the top 5% of players who have played at least 15 years. Any use of numbers besides batting average, home runs, and RBIs may frighten some baseball people, but this is exactly why they shouldn't be allowed to vote.

That's three proposals on how to make the Hall of Fame better, more than any other column will give you today, especially since the voting was announced two weeks ago. With quality individuals like Robb Nen and Matt Williams coming up for induction soon, I have a feeling we might just see our first unanimous selection ever. Of course, since Pete Rose isn't in the Hall of Fame, the whole thing is a complete farce! That guy is a true legend. □

FEATURES

New Professor Promises to Introduce Comparative Law to Constitutional Practice

When David Fontana is asked what he would want to let the GW Law community to know about him, he responded, "I don't want them to know anything. Nothing."

"My door is open if you want to talk about things," the new professor says, moving past his joke. "It is open to anyone; students, professors... to get to know me better or so I can get to know students better." He says that he wants to benefit GW Law in general, "not just in the classroom."

"I have been interested in it for a long time," says Fontana about his interest in law. "It is the perfect combination of abstract ideas and real practice and it combines those two instincts that I have."

"I wanted a career where there was time to think and reflect and also moments of action," Fontana says. "Preparing for class is a lot of work but I get time to think. I think of Sundays as 'Fun-days.'" He laughs.

"The action is in the classroom. This enabled me to do both in a way I don't know that other paths would let me. My whole family is academics. My dad is a professor, my mom is a professor and my sister and brother-in-law are professors." He jokes, "I never saw anyone have a real job. So it was foreseen that I would do this."

He and his family full of professors lived in "upstate New York in a small town; Plattsburgh... near Lake Champlain. And we lived for 6 months in England," Fontana says. He went on to earn his B.A. at the University of Virginia and his J.D. at Yale University and is also working on completing a doctoral degree in socio-legal studies at Oxford University.

He is currently teaching Criminal Law and will be teaching a Comparative Constitutional Law course in the spring. "Its at 8:50 a.m. so that weeds out the only moderately interested students," Fontana jokes. While he describes his schedule as a first year professor as "straight-forward", he anticipates a different course teaching schedule in the future.

Being both one of the newest and youngest members of GW Law's staff,

Fontana described the advantages of this fact. "It helps out in general," he says. "I'm recent enough going through [law school] I can help [students] out, but I have enough distance to have some perspective. Students are able to talk to me comfortably."

"I'll still be doing this: this is really what I always wanted to do," Fontana says about his future plans. He adds that he eventually would like to "write a case book for constitutional law for 1Ls with fifteen to twenty percent non-American law to get a flavor of what is going on in the rest of the world and making it part of how we teach our classes." He also hopes to "get involved in other cases, for example submitting Amicus Briefs to the Supreme Court regarding the constitutional laws of other countries for cases."

Fontana's long-term goal of writing a constitutional law casebook, which includes non-American constitutional law, reveals the issue at the heart of his intellectual interests. "I write about what is going on in other countries' constitutional law and how it interacts with our country and what the U.S. can learn from different systems," Fontana says. He adds that Americans need to "remind ourselves that an important part of our constitution was looking at how other countries do things."

Fontana's resume includes some deep experience. He has researched constitutional law, comparative constitutional law, and comparative law; he has advised congressional and presidential campaigns on legal and foreign policy issues; he has advised newly emerging democracies on the process of drafting constitutions.

Even with his intellectual interests and job occupying his time, Fontana still finds the opportunity to participate in other things in what he describes as his "Two hours a week of quote, unquote, 'free time'." "I sit at home and read cases," Fontana says, as he laughs. "He then adds, "I play in basketball leagues. I like college sports."

"I love it so far," he says of GW Law. "It's the most fun several months I've ever had. I love everything about it so far. I'm really enjoying being here." □

Better Know A Prof

"My door is open if you want to talk about things. It is open to anyone; students, professors... to get to know me better or so I can get to know students better." ~ Professor David Fontana

Daniel Greenspahn The Top Ten

Things You Didn't Know About Professor Freer

Professor Richard Freer is a visiting professor from Emory Law School in Atlanta, Georgia. He is currently teaching Civ Pro II to 1L evening students and Corporations to a packed room of 2Ls and 3Ls.

Q: What brought you to GW?

A: I interviewed for the deanship here. Though I did not get the job, I got to know the school and was very impressed. So when they asked me to visit, I jumped at the chance.

Q: Favorite place to eat in D.C.?

A: This is a tough one. My wife and I don't get out much. We tend to eat at home while watching Jim Cramer's Mad Money. (Booyah.) But we like Pesce, near Dupont.

Q: Book you are currently reading?

A: A Farewell to Arms. I try to read 24 non-law books a year and am currently on a Hemingway kick. It makes me wonder why I fought reading these in high school.

Q: You clerked for 4th Circuit Judge Clement Haynsworth, who was unsuccessfully nominated by Nixon for the Supreme Court. Should Haynsworth have been confirmed to the high court?

A: Yes. The Senate rejected the confirmation as political payback for Republicans' efforts in forcing Justice Fortas off the court.

Q: You share a birthday (April 3) with actors Marlon Brando, Doris Day, and Eddie Murphy. Which one would you most want to have over for dinner, and which one would you most want to be stuck on a desert island with?

A: I'd like to go to a baseball game with Eddie Murphy. But Doris Day for all other events. She is as under-rated as Brando is over-rated. And she played a woman stranded on an island for seven years who then came back to find her husband remarried, etc. So she's done the island thing already.

Q: Pennoyer v. Neff. Bad case? Or the worst case ever?

A: The font of much wisdom. Stephen Field's gift to humankind. Where would we be without it?

Q: You were the first author to criticize the 1990 supplemental jurisdiction statute. How have you handled the fame?

A: It wasn't too tough until they did the movie.

Q: Job you'd most love to have if you didn't teach?

A: Without a doubt, sports broadcaster. Specifically, radio play-by-play baseball announcer. Radio is better than T.V. because you get to paint the picture with words. I grew up with a transistor radio under the pillow, listening to the then-minor league Padres, who had a terrific announcer named Al Schuss, and the Dodgers, with the incomparable Vin Scully.

Q: Law school class you did the worst in?

A: Legal profession, and by a lot. I've never known what to make of it (the grade, not the class).

Q: What would surprise students about you?

A: Maybe the tap dancing. I took lessons for a couple years with my daughter when she was in high school. I'm no good, but I try. □

YOU AUTO KNOW

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FEATURES

MELISSA ANAGNOSTI

The Main Attraction

My intention for this issue was to give movie reviews rather than recommendations, but I did not see as many of the films as I had hoped to over the break. So, below is a mixture of reviews and recommendations.

31. **The Queen (2006)** (DRAMA) starring Helen Mirren, Michael Sheen, James Cromwell and Sylvia Sims, directed by Stephen Frears. This film examines the royal family's public reaction and treatment of the death of Princess Diana in 1997. Playing the part of Queen Elizabeth II, Helen Mirren so skillfully performs the role that she will no doubt be nominated for the Academy Award for Best Actress. The crux of the movie is the public mishandling of the Princess's death, which caused a public outcry in Britain that seriously damaged the image of the monarchy at the time. I found the various live clips of Diana and Buckingham Palace at the time of Diana's death particularly interesting. In addition, I enjoyed watching the newly elected Prime Minister, Tony Blair, trying to console the British people and convince Queen Elizabeth II that she should return to London and speak to her subjects. I found the rest of the movie a bit staid.

32. **Jar Head** (DRAMA) starring Jake Gyllenhall, Chris Cooper, and Jamie Foxx, directed by Sam Mendes. Director Sam Mendes adapted the memoir of Marine sniper Anthony Swofford (played by Jake Gyllenhall) from his stint in boot camp to his arrival in Iraq as part of Desert Shield. The problem with this movie for me is that there is no crescendo or climax. Mendes's characters seem to be ambling through the desert on their way to nowhere while doing almost nothing except being hazed by their Sergeant played by Jamie Foxx. Mendes counts the number of days the men spend in the desert as well as the build up of US troops to 575,000 strong before Desert Shield becomes Desert Storm. I understand that the movie is supposed to illustrate how our soldiers in Desert Storm were not quite sure why they were in Iraq blah, blah, blah. I imagine that war does involve a lot of waiting. I also imagine that Desert Storm involved more than ten men ambling aimlessly through the desert. I do not recommend this one.

33. **A Prairie Home Companion** (DRAMA) starring Woody Harrelson, Tommy Lee Jones, Garrison Keillor, Kevin Kline, Lindsay Lohan, Virginia Madsen, John C. Reilly, Maya Rudolph, Meryl Streep, and Lily Tomlin, directed by Robert Altman. This is the last movie directed by Robert Altman, who died November 20th, 2006. Altman was sick with cancer during the filming of this movie, so he retained P.T. Anderson (director of *Magnolia*) as pinch hitter to finish the film in case he died before it was completed. The film is a fictionalized account of the radio show of the same name. In Altman's version, a large corporation has bought the theater from which the show is broadcast, and this is a glimpse into the show's last performance. There is a lot of material in here that I interpret as Altman philosophizing about his own impending death. Meryl Streep and Lily Tomlin play a delightful, funny sister singing act. Of course, Meryl Streep gives a great performance. The film was created in an older style, where people sing and what not. I really enjoyed it, but my neighbor with whom I tried to watch the movie almost tore his eyes out. I had to bring the movie back up to my apartment to finish watching it.

34. **Midnight Cowboy** (DRAMA) starring Jon Voight and Dustin Hoffman, directed by John Schlesinger. This is the story of a Texas "cowboy", played by Jon Voight, who comes to New York City in the early 70s looking to hustle wealthy woman. His act is not well received, and he finds himself hooking up with Dustin Hoffman, who plays a cripple and a petty thief, whose dream is to make it to Miami. The two men become squatters in a condemned New York City apartment, and an unlikely friendship develops between the two. This film won the Academy Award for Best Picture and Best Director, and both Voight and Hoffman were nominated for the Best Actor Award. The movie garnered the Best Picture Award in 1969 despite its X-rating, and it is still the only X-rated film to do so. The film was later reclassified as an R-rated movie, definitely more appropriate than an X-rating, when compared to movies of today. The movie also feels a bit outdated, but I think part of its charm is the seedy, rotten depiction of the Big Apple in the early 70s.

35. **Pride and Prejudice** (DRAMA) starring Keira Knightley, Matthew Macfadyen, Brenda Blethyn, Donald Sutherland, Jena Malone, Dame Judi Dench, Rosamund Pike, directed by Joe Wright. I am not one for mushy love stories, but I love this movie. It is obviously the film adaptation of the Jane Austen book of the same title. It's sort of the age old story of a woman detesting a man only to find that she loves him. There is a beautiful operatic piano score in the background, and the movie was nominated for four Academy Awards including, Best Achievement in Music Written for a Motion Picture and Original Score. Gentleman, if you want to impress your lady with how romantic you are, rent this one. □

Hugs and Kisses, Hope This Helps!

Do you type? Have access to a computer connected to the Internet? Feel the obsessive-compulsive need to engage in provocative, rancorous banter that without the veil of anonymity would get you canned by character and fitness? If all these elements are met, then watch out! We have *prima facie* indication that you have engaged in the

crime of perusing one or more online law school discussion boards. In the vast galaxy of shining stars that make up the Internet, these black holes suck in otherwise dedicated young law students (and some lawyers) into rapid-fire exchanges of insults, venting, posturing, and plenty of scuttlebutt about grades, schools, and firms that is all meticulously calculated to drive each other bonkers with insecurity and resentment.

Let's take a look at a few, starting at the bottom of the barrel. Jdjive.com is a focal point for many practicing attorneys, most of whom seem to work in

small insurance defense or personal injury shops. Many of them are unhappy about their decisions to become lawyers and spend their time griping about abusive work environments that promise long, grueling hours for low pay. Typically, they went to schools ranked in the lower echelons of the U.S. News and graduated with a lot of debt without any lucrative career options that would allow them to pay it off. These are the tragic heroes of our profession, modern day King Lear who have exchanged their ermine fur for worsted wool from Hong Kong. And appropriately, I think the prospect of having to bill three thousand hours for \$40,000 a year – in New York City – is enough to make me go mad and gouge my eyes out.

If Jdjivers are birds with broken wings, LawSchoolDiscussion.org is a nest of the eggs from which they hatch. By contrast, here the mood is one of confidence and hope. Everyone here knows that lawyers make a lot of money, do all sorts of interesting work, and have high regard in the professional community. Everyone here expects to make top ten percent and law review. The more knowledgeable and jaded among us will take a look at some of these quixotic comments and cringe from their saccharine-sweetness: "Tier 2 bound and proud!" "You got a 151? Wow! You did better than 50% of the people who took the LSAT!" The feeling is similar to watching the fat upper crust on the Titanic waddle around with life jackets over their stuffed shirts and cummerbunds, ignoring the imminent, painful catastrophe.

For my money though, these and all others are second to the digital leviathan of prestige that is xoxohth.com. This is the A-list set, composed of the crème de

la crème of the most elite schools in the country – and invariably the most juvenile. A quick glance at some of the threads shows loads of cryptic acronyms used for shorthand communication; examples include: TTT (Third-tier toilet, a malaprop-

ism commonly directed at any school ranked less than #5); and WGWAG (white girls with Asian guys, a shticky

"Killroy was here" tag that gets posted to many threads by an apparently staunch proponent of interracial dating). Some of the personalities have become mini-legends among the regulars of the board,

though there's no telling what basis any of them has in reality. There is "MadCat", a twenty-something Legal Aid attorney from Baltimore whose life resembles an Americanized version of Bridget Jones. There is "pensive," a very eccentric mathematician who from time to time appears and launches into bizarre, rambling monologues that usually decry about how

life is so much more difficult for intelligent people and instruct others on how to enhance their level of prestige through career and lifestyle choices. Last but not least is "Henrietta Egg", who claims to be twenty-nine and enrolled as a 1L in GW's part-time program. She appears to be clearly torn about her decision to attend law school at such an age and worries about the financial impact tuition and her earning potential as an IP lawyer will have.

Granted, like every open forum on the net, each of these sites has a very high ratio of B.S. to good content. Still, there's a lot of utility to be extracted from them if you're willing to put forth the time and tolerance. Assuming that you're going to give a modicum of credence to the other users, they can offer a fledgling like yourself a lot of insight into areas that the glossy law school brochures don't depict with the same amount of precision. Incumbent students who have been through the circus of admissions can give some grounded advice to newbies as to which schools will accept them based on their stats. People often advertise their experience with a particular firm or practice area and happily chat about the kinds of work they do, fielding questions from the curious. But most important of all, no matter what the topics, it's not so much the content of the communications that attracts people to these places as it is the candor that pervades them.

In a world where appearances can count as much as substance, and everyone is always mindful of what they say, at any given moment, it's nice to be able to let your inhibitions and your guard down in a way that only an anonymous screen name can provide. I urge you to give it a try if you haven't already. □

GARTLEBY

A Story of K Street

In the vast galaxy of shining stars that make up the Internet, these black holes suck in otherwise dedicated young law students (and some lawyers) into rapid-fire exchanges of insults, venting, posturing. . .

OPINIONS

One More to Go

The State of Our Union

Let us imagine for a few minutes that you are President George W. Bush.

Two months ago the American people gave Democrats control of both the House and Senate, largely as a rejection of you and your Iraq policy. Then a commission of moderate elder statesmen released a report bluntly describing just why the American people rejected your Iraq policy. It went on to outline a way for the country to begin to get out of Iraq while minimizing any damage done in the process. You promptly ignored the report, conducted your own policy review, and came to the opposite conclusion: escalate. After going on national television to announce your plan, the American public thought even less of you than it did when they voted your party out of power two months earlier.

Tonight, Tim Russert, Tom Brokaw, and Brian Williams will spend half an hour rehashing all of this, and then you will stand up before the nation and say, "My fellow Americans, the state of our union is strong."

So that the rest of your speech doesn't sound quite as ridiculous as its opening line, I have some advice.

At this point in the column, I had planned to outline in some depth three things the President could say that would help him regain some credibility. First, genuinely admit mistakes without deflecting responsibility in the passive voice paired with a call for unity. Second, rather than simply tell the American people what the plan is as the Decider-in-Chief, ask for their support and call for their sacrifice as Leader-in-Chief. Third, take bold symbolic action that would garner the support of your opposition, sapping some of its strength as you regain the high ground. Closing the prison at Guantanamo Bay, and in the process, making the case for the fairness of the American justice system and rebuilding international goodwill could be such a bold gesture.

But, as I attempted to argue for each one, they seemed more and more improbable. The first would come off as insincere. Humility coerced by political circumstances will inevitably be second-guessed. The second would cause support for his policies to fall through the basement, since few people are willing to

sacrifice for something they don't agree with in the first place. And, the third is just completely unrealistic, however nice a thought for a few minutes it may have been to hear the President make such an announcement.

The truth of the matter is that at this point in his presidency, public perception of George W. Bush is pretty set. We know the contours of his personality and judge his actions accordingly. For this State of the Union address to really mean anything, it's got to be about substance, and it's got to be huge.

However, can the public really get behind a new public policy initiative when the 800 pound gorilla dominating the political agenda is Iraq? If the President does take the free airtime to start something new, it's going to be national security related, rather than say, healthcare reform, the ballooning debt, or how the L.A. Galaxy can possibly pay Beckham's contract.

The first issue that jumps out would of course be ending our dependence on Mid-East oil. There are some indications in the press that we might get this, building on last year's stuttering "America must end its addiction to oil." If it's on a scale that could possibly make Thomas Friedman happy, then that might actually be something to celebrate.

Another possibility could be the announcement of a diplomatic surge to complement the military one. The President could announce a Mid-East diplomacy conference, taking cover behind the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group report (just as it was designed to do) to talk with Iran and Syria about ending their interference in Iraq. This would also give Secretary of State Rice an opportunity to counter her critics as an ineffectual foreign affairs official.

I would prefer the usual run-down of economic statistics with lovable anecdotes from everyday families sitting beside the First Lady to unenthusiastic attempts at legacy shopping with big policy initiatives. At this point, I'm just tired of writing 'President' before George W. Bush without qualifying the whole thing with 'former.' I'll be watching the speech Tuesday night, comforted by the fact that next year is his last one. □

During his State of the Union Address, the President will be faced with the task of pushing his new strategic vision for Iraq while trying to build common ground on domestic issues with more moderate Democrats in Congress. He is no doubt going to talk about the stock market, job market, federal budget, tax cuts, and probably education. But there are a few things that he simply shouldn't go without addressing: the new strategy for Iraq and the rising threats of Iran, North Korea, and Venezuela's Hugo Chavez.

The recent record highs of a strong stock market would be a great way to soften up the room and start with something that most folks can agree on. He might follow it up with a few words on the strength of the American job market. The creation of over seven million new jobs since 2003, the continued low 4.5% unemployment rate, and the fact that the United States is currently the fastest growing economy of the G-7 are all great talking points. The President will almost certainly tie much of this progress to the tax cuts that have been implemented during his time in office, and he'll surely continue to press Congress to make them permanent.

The federal budget is a touchy issue right now, but it's one that no President, especially this one, can ignore. His new proposal to balance the federal budget over the next five years should be a focus. He has also been pushing for earmark reform, and he'll likely take a few swings with that club before moving on.

It's been five years since the No Child Left Behind Act was passed, and rising achievement levels nationwide ensure that the reauthorization of the Act will be a priority for the President. One key point that he'll probably stress is the narrowing achievement gap between minority and white grade school students.

The global war on terror is sure to ac-

count for a significant portion of the President's speech. His strategic troop surge is coming under fire from Democrats in Congress, and he's going to want to harness the debate as much as possible. One thing that the president should surely do is remind the Democrats in Congress that they were elected on a platform of strategy change, not a platform of cut-and-run. There is a big difference between altering the strategy to achieve victory and adopting a policy of utter retreat. He should reassure the American people that his troop surge is meant to help the Iraqi government gain control of the situation and ease the transition to Iraqi control.

Reemphasizing the other aspects of his plan, like increasing U.S. involvement in tactical planning while allowing the Iraqi troops to do more of the fighting, is essential. The President will almost surely reiterate that failure is not an option, and a U.S. retreat would be bad for Iraq, the entire Middle East, the United States, and the rest of the western world. The situation in Iraq isn't going to stay contained there if we just up and leave; it will follow us home.

The State of the Union also provides a prime opportunity for the President to remind the Congress and the country of some of the other significant and pressing international issues. North Korea and Iran are still pursuing their nuclear weapons programs. Iran and Syria are still suspected of supporting insurgent activities in Iraq. And now, Hugo Chavez is pressing his Castro-esque efforts to nationalize foreign-owned private industry in Venezuela. It is important for the President to remind people that a failure in Iraq will only embolden these fanatical leaders.

I am particularly interested to see how the President will choose to address China's recent anti-satellite weapons test. While the extent of Chinese dependence on U.S. trade makes me doubt that China is a direct military threat, it is impossible to ignore the implications of a rogue state like Iran or North Korea acquiring this technology and using it against orbital spy, communications, and navigation satellites. Such a capacity is not only a threat to our military, but it is also a threat to commercial satellites. The President should at least make a statement criticizing the further weaponization of space and the irresponsibility of endangering the lives of astronauts with the orbiting shrapnel that resulted from the test.

With the Democratic takeover of Congress in full swing, the President will try to draw the framework for upcoming debates on most of the big issues. He will face the same tired old criticisms from those who label him as an alarmist, but the issues that he will focus on are real, and they demand our attention. The blissfully unaware 90s are over, and they're not coming back no matter how much the Democratic leadership wants them to.

-Adam is a 3L, and he doesn't like Hugo Chavez. □

Crossword 101

"You Auto Know" By Ed Canty

ACROSS

1 Undruggable

5 Ship of the desert

10 Rights org.

14 Friendly nation

15 Like an old woman

16 Word before stream or dish

17 Take the bus

18 Auto

20 Angeles

21 Phone part

22 Kind of football

23 Mexican Indians

25 Huck's vehicle

27 More sluggish

29 Willy Loman

33 Tramps

34 Havana for one

35 Mr. Gershwin

36 Plant part

37 City slickers

38 Comes between root and leaf

39 Chum

40 Got by

41 Hindu social system

42 Raises in rank

44 More hallowed

45 Minerals

46 Bradham-Pepel founder

47 Jelly garnish

50 Follower of Ali

51 Arizona and Missouri

54 Auto

57 Employee safety law

58 Mad Hatter for one

59 Homer's story

60 Fake

61 Ogled

62 Beat

63 Conceal

DOWN

1 Olympian Lewis

2 Stew with chickpeas

3 Auto

4 Soap ingredient

5 Delicacy

6 Old World buffaloes

7 Factory, e.g.

8 Moose relative

9 Mary Ford's partner

10 Stings

11 Congressional worker

12 Heir

13 O'Neill's Christie

19 Precedes thin

21 Coloring materials

24 Truant

25 Blew up

26 Pitiful word

27 Form

28 Military contractor

29 Flanks

30 Auto

31 Mountain ridge

32 Christener

34 Remedies

37 Take out

38 Bargain

40 Comedy

41 Carbonated drink

43 Invalidated

44 Collier's specialty

46 Stingy

47 1975 Wimbledon champ

48 Refuse to budge

49 Undefined

50 Reed quickly

52 Herring relative

53 Identical

55 Small quantity

56 Brew

57 Kosh

Quotable Quote

"When a man opens a car door for his wife, it's either a new car or a new wife."

Prince Phillip

Duke of Edinburgh

By GFR Associates E-Mail: EDC9432@aol.com

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Answer on page 5

OPINIONS

Strengthening GW's Exam Policies

For the first time this past fall, GW students in a handful of classes participated in a flexible exam pilot program designed to accommodate students with finals at the same time or on the same day. GW should be proud of its efforts to ensure that school policies help students pick the classes in which they are most interested. Posting course evaluations and old exams online are other examples of invaluable resources that are provided to students.

But as the law school looks to strengthen its exam policies, there are several other improvements its faculty and curriculum committee should consider:

1. Post Grading Deadlines on the Portal: Each professor is currently given a deadline for submitting grades based on the number of classes and students they teach, and almost all the faculty meet these targets. Those deadlines should be posted on the portal on the last day of final exams to eliminate some of the daily anxiety students get from constantly checking for grades online. Posting the deadlines will also help students plan in applying for jobs, internships, and clerkships based on when their grades will be available.

2. Post Curve and Grade Distribution Requirements on the Portal: Some professors explain the curve that they are required to apply in determining grades. But many students are unaware of the precise breakdown requirements or of the differences in grading for classes with fewer than 35 students. Posting this information on the portal will help students better understand the rules that govern the grades that they receive.

3. Return Finals Through the Re-

ords Office: GW professors are very generous in meeting with students to discuss exams. However, the task of coordinating with each professor to get back or review a copy of one's exam can be a chore for students and professors alike. Instead,

all faculty should turn graded exams over to the records office with instructions about whether students can keep or merely review

the exam. This would give students more of an opportunity to look over the tests that determined their grades.

4. Create a More Flexible Pass/Fail Policy: Letting students take classes pass/fail is one way GW helps encourage students to be bold in choosing courses. When students sign up to take a class pass/fail they should be allowed to select a target letter grade; if a student earns that grade or above, the actual grade should appear on the transcript. Some students might decide they want the class to show up graded if they get better than a B. Others may only be willing to settle for an A or A-. Regardless, such a policy gives students greater flexibility, not to mention a chance to strengthen their GPAs. Faculty would benefit too because students would have an incentive to work hard even in courses they are taking pass/fail. Georgetown has been offering this system to its law school students since its faculty adopted such a policy in 2002.

There is a lot the faculty and administration are already doing to help strengthen GW's exam policies. As those efforts continue, reforms that add transparency and flexibility to the system should be considered, especially those that will benefit students, faculty, and the school as a whole. □

DANIEL GREENSPAHN

Opinion

Our Plan for Flexible Exams and Journals

Another semester is starting and things are looking good. With only a few more months left in law school, I am excited about the prospects for this semester and months leading up to that day in late May when I lose touch with the outside world and combat the evil that is the California bar exam. This evil knows no boundaries, and you can rest assured it is going to be a long summer.

Summer is years away in law school time, though. There will be plenty to keep myself, the Class of 2007, and the SBA busy over the next few months. For 3Ls and 4Ls eyeing graduation, the SBA Senior Programming Committee will be kicking off the Countdown to Graduation this coming Thursday for Happy Hour at Garrett's in Georgetown. Over the next few months there will be plenty going on as soon-to-be graduates cling on for dear life to those last days of being a student. The clock is slowly counting down. Let's have one last great semester!

For the SBA, we are also going to have a busy few months. On the programming side, we have Barrister's Ball on February 2nd at the Hilton Washington and the GW Law Games at the end of the semester. Also, elections for next year's leadership will be held on February 21st. On the advocacy end, we are going forward on our push to bring flexible exams to the law school and adding another journal.

Flexible Exams

Much of what the SBA will be working on over the next two months will be centered on bringing flexible exams to the law school. This fall, for the first time ever, the law school held a pilot flexible exam program in four courses. Though there were some issues with notice and participation, the pilot is beneficial from our standpoint, since it helps debunk preconceived notions that it is impossible to have

any sort of exam flexibility at GW Law. Our goal for this semester is to have a faculty vote on the adoption of flexible exams at the law school.

This week we will be surveying the student body on the issue of flexible exams in order to gauge support for not only the larger issue of flexible exams, but also preferences

for specific policies. Throughout the week members of the Executive Board will be actively soliciting student participation in the survey, as well as providing background information on the issue of exam flexibility. From this survey, we will be reporting to the faculty on your preferences in hopes of having changes made for next year. For more details on flexible exams, please check out our report from last year available at www.gwsba.com.

New Journal

As many of you are aware, the SBA has also been very active in trying to bring a new journal to the law school. Megan Mocho, Vice President

of Outreach, has been working closely with Dean Schooner on trying to find a way

to invite an already existing journal to join the law school. Last semester, the SBA Senate ranked several currently unaffiliated journals. The results of the Senate vote are below.

1st: Antitrust L.J.

2nd: National Tax

J.

3rd: Tort Trial & Ins. Practice L.J.

4th: Business Lawyer

5th: American Business Law Journal

Our plans for this semester are to solicit current faculty members to see if anyone is interested in being faculty advisor to these journals or have connections with any of these journals and would be willing to help recruit a journal to come to GW.

Though we are optimistic, it will be difficult to find a faculty advisor, since most of our current faculty members are already busy with a variety of other projects. As such, we intend to work closely with the Faculty-Student Committees concerned with Tenure, Faculty Recruitment and Appointments to craft a policy where one consideration in the decision on whether to invite a visiting professor to join our faculty is whether he or she would be

willing to serve as a faculty advisor for a new journal. In addition to this effort, we look forward to continuing to work with faculty on bringing new writing opportunities to the law school.

This is going to be a busy semester, but I am excited. I encourage every one to get involved this semester and, of course, to participate in our flexible exam survey. □



SAM JAMMAL

Message from the Prez

This week we will be surveying the student body on the issue of flexible exams in order to gauge support for not only the larger issue of flexible exams, but also preferences for specific policies.

Though we are optimistic, it will be difficult to find a faculty advisor, since most of our current faculty members are already busy with a variety of other projects.



PRESIDENT BUSH TRIES OUT HIS NEW IRAQ STRATEGY ON A DIFFERENT SET OF JUDGES.

